

(c) the arguments advanced by the working group for changing the basis of calculating inflation; and

(d) the assessment of Government as to which income bracket is facing comparative difficulty as a result of current trends of WPI movement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN): (a) Statement is given in the Annexure [see Appendix 190, Annexure No. 38]

(b) Statement is given in the Annexure. [See Appendix 190, Annexure No. 39]

(c) There is no change in the methodology for computation of inflation rate. However, the Working Group for the Revision of Index Numbers of Wholesale Prices in India [Base 1993-94=100], has in its report, recommended that a separate measure of inflation may be computed because a true measure of inflation should measure the prices only at the final demand level and not at intermediate demand level. The current WPI is a mix of both.

(d) No such assessment has been made. However, the Government continues to be guided by the 1993-94 Lakdawala Committee assessment of population below the poverty line for which the Government is committed to supply food grains at half the economic cost through PDS. This policy is motivated by protecting the low income population from the rise in market prices of essential commodities such as food grains.

Augmenting of State in Anti-Dumping Directorate

2971. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases of dumping reported by the industry during the last two years;

(b) the number of these cases investigated;

(c) whether it is a fact that the Anti-Dumping Directorate is not adequately staffed to handle these cases; and

(d) the steps being taken to augment the staff strength to handle such cases which might be reported in increasing numbers with the removal of Quantitative Restrictions after April, 2001?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) The Directorate General of Anti-Dumping and Allied Duties (DGAD) has initiated investigations in 31 fully documented petitions

received from domestic industry with prima-facie evidence of dumping, injury and causal link from 1st April, 1998 to 31st March, 2000.

(c) and (d) The Directorate General of Anti-Dumping & Allied Duties is equipped to deal with all the cases of dumping of commodities causing injury to domestic industry. The Directorate General of Anti-Dumping and Allied Duties will be suitably strengthened as and if required to cope with increasing number of cases.

Hike in Customs and Import Duties on Agricultural Items

2972. SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN:

SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have raised basic customs duty or import duty on a number of agricultural items to safeguard interests of the agricultural sector in the post QR era; and

(b) if so, the list of these items and the details of the hike in the duty of each of these items?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) Based on the representations received and the need for providing protection to domestic producers, import duty on some agricultural commodities has been raised recently. In the Budget proposals for the year 2000-2001, the basic custom duty on most of the agricultural products was raised to the peak rate of 35%. During this financial year customs duty on some agricultural products for example milk powder, poultry products, apples, edible oils, arecanut, spelt, millet, maize, jowar etc. has been raise even beyond the peak rate of the duty. The details are furnished in the table given below:

BASIC CUSTOMS DUTY ON CERTAIN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS RAISED SUBSEQUENT TO BUDGET - 2000-2001

Sl.	Description of goods	Basic duty of customs (before increase)	Basic duty of customs (after increase)
1.	Edible grade crude vegetable oils (excluding coconut oil, palm oil and its fractions whether refined or not) imported in loose or bulk form manufacture of vanaspati or for refining	15%	25%